



A LENS-EYE VIEW *of Heritage Open Day*

I arrived at the Whitehorse Historical Society Museum Complex, got out of the car, and looked up at the sky. Unlike last year's overcast beginning, this year's Open Day was greeted with weather that was warm – and perfect for a family day out.

I had been given the task of photographing the event, of photographing the various activities and displays being enjoyed, and even before the advertised noon commencement people were starting to arrive and wander around.

The first opportunity to take the sort of photo I was seeking came with the Animal Farm, which remained a popular event for the rest of the day. Lambs, a goose, chickens and a

turkey shared a pen with a llama, two goats and two calves. All shared the space peacefully with each other and their human visitors (unlike last year, when a young bull had to be penned off when he became too enamoured of the llama, occasioning awkward questions of their parents by some of the younger children).

Plenty of opportunities presented themselves for my camera to capture children playing games, painting, having their faces painted, and being enthralled by Tom the Magician, who later 'swapped hats' and popularly became silhouette maker to many fascinated kids and grown-ups.

Continued on page 4

Next meeting: Saturday, 12 October
1.30 p.m.

GENERAL MEETING

Speaker: John Payne

'Where Was That Theatre?'

CONTENTS

♦ President's Report	2
♦ Your Committee in Action	2
♦ August Meeting Report	3
♦ Heritage Open Day Continued	4
♦ From the Blackburn & Mitcham Reporter	5
♦ Diary Dates	5
♦ Unearthing the History of Weston Favell	6

FROM THE PRESIDENT – PETER SIMMENAUER

Dear Members,

As I will be either still away or jet-lagged when this Newsletter is being prepared, I've asked Vicki, as Vice-President, to report on recent matters. My contribution will be a few words about the next 12 months.

They will be difficult. Over the last few years, despite a small increase in membership, we have lost many active volunteers from the committee and the Wednesday Working Group. This means a loss of valuable skills and experience. We have reached a stage where there are too few people to carry out the work that is needed to maintain the Society and develop our programs to the professional standards that we are accredited to.

What have we done about this? We have recruited new volunteers, but not enough to fill the gaps. We have carried out a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), assessed its findings and conducted a survey of the management of the Society and of our committee. The outgoing committee approved changes to the roles of office-bearers and recommended the appointment of external members to the committee to improve expertise and community links. Further discussions are being held regarding organisation and recruitment of volunteers.

To improve the situation we need the help of you, the members. How? To give your time and skills as volunteers and learn the further skills that we need. To help us obtain new members with professional skills or an interest in developing them.

We are fortunate to get good support from Whitehorse Council. Thanks to successful applications for grants, our funds, though modest, are sufficient. We

just need people with time, skill, willingness to learn and enthusiasm to continue to develop and promote our educational and recreational services to our community. It is your community too!

Heritage Family Day

The weather was perfect for our Heritage Family Day this year, and our official attendance figure is 700.

The City of Whitehorse was as usual generous with their support of our event. The Community Grant enabled us to provide all the usual attractions. We were this year able to include the Victorian Folk Music Club musicians, who added atmosphere as they circulated around the Complex. The Council funded the Animals of Oz – a very popular attraction, as well as Art tutors from the Box Hill Community Arts Centre who provided the opportunity for visitors to try painting.

It was nice to welcome Crs Raylene Carr, and Bill Bennett to our festivities and to see the Complex being enjoyed by so many visitors.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank all the members who helped on the day. I also wish to express our gratitude to Julie Jones, Heritage Programs Officer, for her tireless efforts in making the day a success, and to museum attendants and the Council staff, whose contribution ensured happy occasion for all.

After many years of doing an excellent job as co-ordinator of the Open Day, Barbara Gardiner is retiring from the position. I would like to extend the committee's thanks to Barbara both for her hard work this year and for all the years she has organised these events.

Peter and Vicki



IVY UPDATE

After seeing the story on Ivy Weber in our last issue, reader George Cox (former Member for Nunawading Province) contacted us to tell of the time he found in Parliament House a painting of Ivy Weber that had been damaged by water. Recognising its historical significance, he organised for it to be restored and rehung. It has been provided with a brass plaque and is on view to this day in Parliament House, in the corridor outside the Legislative Assembly.

Statistics

Photographs Cataloguing	-	4005
Artefacts Cataloguing	-	4565
Documents Cataloguing	-	6516
Visitors to Museum July/August	-	265
Facebook 'Likes' to September	-	278

Your Committee in Action

To keep people informed about the monthly committee meetings the newsletter each issue includes a brief summary of the main topics discussed over the previous two months.

- ◆ The Debutant Ball photos (1935; 1946–1954) have been scanned and the copies are currently awaiting framing.
- ◆ In August we had two displays in libraries – Nunawading Library featured cameras, and Vermont South Library showcased the Schwerkolt Complex.
- ◆ The Splish Splash museum display was installed, and will run until December.
- ◆ The City of Whitehorse Art Space at Box Hill Town Hall received our contribution to the Water-holes display.
- ◆ Peter Simmenauer was welcomed as our new president for 2013–2014

August Meeting Report

50 years of local and strip shopping centres

Gerry Robinson spoke at the History Room, Mitcham, August 10, 2013

Shopping centres vary immensely. The *International Council of Shopping Centers* in New York contrasts the increasingly prevalent mall (with covered walkways) with the traditional strip, and then identifies eight types: neighbourhood, community, regional, superregional, fashion centre, power centre, theme centre, and outlet centre. Undoubtedly the nature of shopping is changing, and with it the nature of venues where shopping takes place.

A strip shopping centre that was once in Purches Street, Vermont East, had at least eight specialist shops – butcher, chemist, grocer and so on, but these days most have gone. It was a local social centre. What happened! As it now has a bakery, a coffee shop and other ‘take aways’, is it because the style of life has altered?

Why then is one in Heathmont thriving? Is it because of the train and a main road? Is it a good location, nestled in the valley? Although there used to be four service stations, now there are none. The outskirts of these shopping areas are often populated by professional people – doctors, dentists, vets.

The whole character of shops has altered. Public transport was initially important; now it is all about private cars. In this, strip shopping can be a problem with the distance between shops and parking arrangements. Another problem is that strips do not suit the teenage population.

Where once tradespeople delivered everything, self-service and online shopping is meaning that traditional centres must rethink their approach to the customer in order to survive. It is a fight for survival: Mitcham remains an effective shopping area, whilst Nunawading’s importance has waned. The ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ need to be understood.

Now many local centres are called ‘Villages’, creating an ambience that allows for more social interaction so that you don’t need to go to big shopping centres. Shopkeepers knowing customers by name, neighbours greeting each other on the street: these things can be seen as the survival ‘tools’ of the strip shopping centre.

NP414

looking south along White's Shopping Centre,
Mitcham Road, Mitcham 1971



It seems likely that more and more of the smaller ones will follow recent examples such as Vermont and Blackburn Station, each of which only recently deemed itself a ‘Village’. A striking local example is that of Croydon North shopping centre becoming ‘Maroondah Village’ in 2012. The ultimate accolade is when even the word ‘village’ is no longer needed: ‘Maling Road’, for example, is sufficient designation!

Technology has altered our shopping habits: cars and refrigeration mean we don’t have to shop every day. Social changes, such as the prevalence of working mothers, plus many labour-saving devices, allow many families to eat out; even teenagers have greater spending power. So times are still changing, and who knows what other changes will happen in the next fifty years?

SHOPPING then **SHOPPING now**

then: Mums in hat and gloves
walk to shops – home deliveries
put it on the slate – buy, then cook
and eat at home – closed Saturday
afternoon and Sunday – car parking
available – children doing the shop-
ping after school – shopkeepers and
shoppers knew each others’ names
– afternoon Herald bikes

now: Mums in jeans – mums in
cars – weekly self-service – credit
card /EFTPOS – open 7 days –
prepackaged frozen foods – coffee/
restaurants – car parks full – ATMs
– mobile phones – bottled water –
online, so don’t even come to the
shops!

Valerie Marshall



A LENS-EYE VIEW

of Heritage Open Day

from page 1

Families wandered around looking at the stationary engines, the model train display (where children got to actually control the trains), the Meccano, the spinning and weaving, the blacksmith at work and the Schwerkolt Cottage, as well as many other attractions.

Before the end of the day the Forest Hill Rotary Club, who had operated the sausage sizzle, were packing up, having sold all their sausages; and the arrival of 5 o'clock brought with it for all the relief and satisfaction of a successful event.

Particular thanks are due to Bob Gardiner, for all his efforts, both organisational and 'at the coal face'. Our sincere thanks also go to our volunteers who worked so hard, whether ensuring that our stallholders had food and drink or performing one of the many other tasks needed to make the day such a happy one for all. And special thanks to City of Whitehorse Officer Julie Jones, who assisted with her staff both in the planning of the event and on the day itself.

by Christopher Gray



From the

Blackburn & Mitcham Reporter

Friday, 13 September 1935

Don't look like this..

Save fuel and enjoy real comfort. In other words, COOK WITH GAS. Furthermore, a modern Gas stove will improve the look of your kitchen.

Prices suit the smallest purse. Sizes suit the largest family. Types suit all tastes.

THE COLONIAL GAS ASSOCIATION LIMITED

F. BIRD PTY. LTD.,

MAIN STREET, BOX HILL,

805 CANTERBURY RD., SURREY HILLS

"Good Public Service"



Whitehorse Historical Society Dates for your Diary

Meetings are held at the Local History Room,
Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex.

Saturday, 12 October, 1.30pm

General Meeting Speaker: John Payne

'Where Was that Theatre?'

Saturday, 14 December, 1.30pm

General Meeting

Speakers: Paula Herlihy, Karen Phillips and Ian

James (from Mt Evelyn HS)

*'Aborigines in the Yarra Valley
and Northern Dandenongs'*

Working Bees 2013

**Please make a diary note and join us on
the day.**

Working Bees commence at 9.30am and finish
around 12 noon with a great morning tea.

The final Working Bee for this year

will be held on

Saturday, 9 November

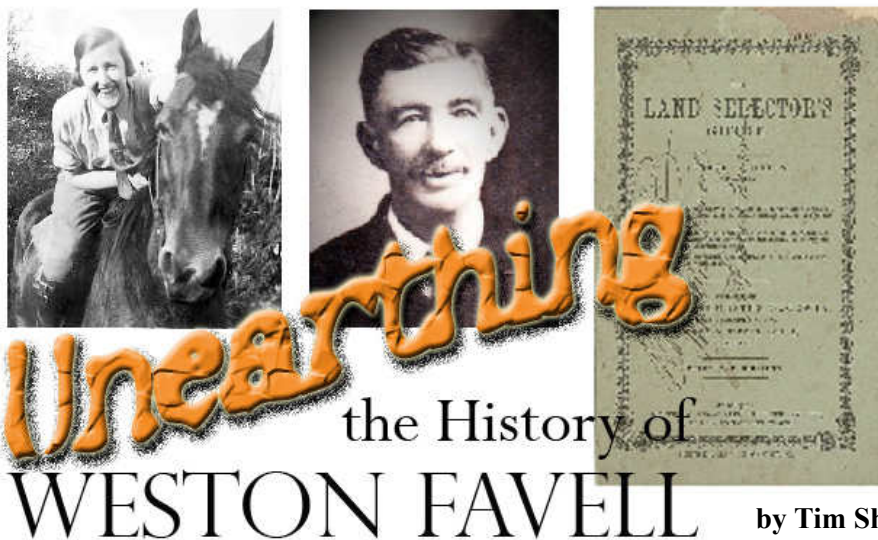
**Please come and help even if you can only
offer an hour of your time.**

VERMONT.

FIELD DAY AT ORCHARD.

It was estimated that close on three hundred attended the field day and demonstration of implements in the orchard of Mr. F. G. Beet, Railway road, on 5th September. Fortunately the weather held until the outside part of the programme had been carried out, and the organisers are highly pleased with the result. Concerned in the arrangements were the V.F.M.A., Southern Pear Packing Co., Southern Fruit Growers, East Burwood Fruitgrowers, and the Victoria Mark. Co. Among those who were present were directors of the above associations and companies, Mr. Ward, superintendent of horticulture for the Department of Agriculture, and growers from all parts of the state. The primary object of the outing was a demonstration by Mr. Greatorrex, field officer for the department, of the latest method of grafting over the pear, in this instance, from Howell to Packham's Triumph. In addition, there was an interesting display of various implements, tractor and horse drawn. An apple wiping machine was closely studied.

The disposal of low-grade fruit is a question which has long vexed the minds of fruitgrowers. In Mr. Beet's shed was arranged an exhibit of two methods by which such fruit may be utilised, namely, pure fruit juice drinks, and a processed article in cans, both unsweetened. The manufacturers have already met with considerable demand for those, and feel confident that they will extend their operations until real benefit is felt by the industry.



Far left: Gwen Nethercote with Lady 1939
Centre: George Augustus Goodwin
Left: 'The Land Selectors Guide' by George A. Goodwin Second Edition

by Tim Shambrook

After more than 20 years of VicRoads ownership and neglect, the fate of Weston Favell, at 142 Boronia Road, Vermont, rests with a number of recommendations that will shortly be released to the public as part of the Healesville Reservation Renewal Project. The property, which has a local Heritage Overlay, will hopefully be revived in some form. The groundwork for this Heritage Overlay started back in the early 1990s when Valda Arrowsmith and I were part of the Nunawading Heritage Study Steering Committee.

To highlight the property's community significance, we must delve into, collate and publicise its past. The most valuable information is in the accounts and observations made by people who had lived there, and then marrying this information with photographs and data in their many forms.

In the 1980s I had some casual work at the local grocery store in Vermont, and sometimes I would assist with delivery runs. On one occasion I was fortunate to meet Gerald Letts, of 142 Boronia Road. His wife Beryl Violet had passed away in 1972, yet he had kept the property in immaculate condition. The gardens were lovely, with well-kept lawns. In fact, for many years Beryl and Gerald would open their house and garden for charity fundraising. There was an old, damp water-course at the rear of their property (an old creek bed) and a flat open space that had once been the location of a tennis court.

Gerald Letts had lived on the property of 5 acres since 1940, and the only alterations he had made to the house in that time were the removal of one of the original two chimneys and the addition of a room on the front of the house that replaced part of the verandah. I fortunately took some photographs of the house at the time, the reason being that I believed it was probably the oldest remaining in Vermont at the time.

Gerald Letts had once found a piece of the *Argus* newspaper in the roof dating back to 1892. He owned the property from 1940 until his death in 1987, when VicRoads acquired it.

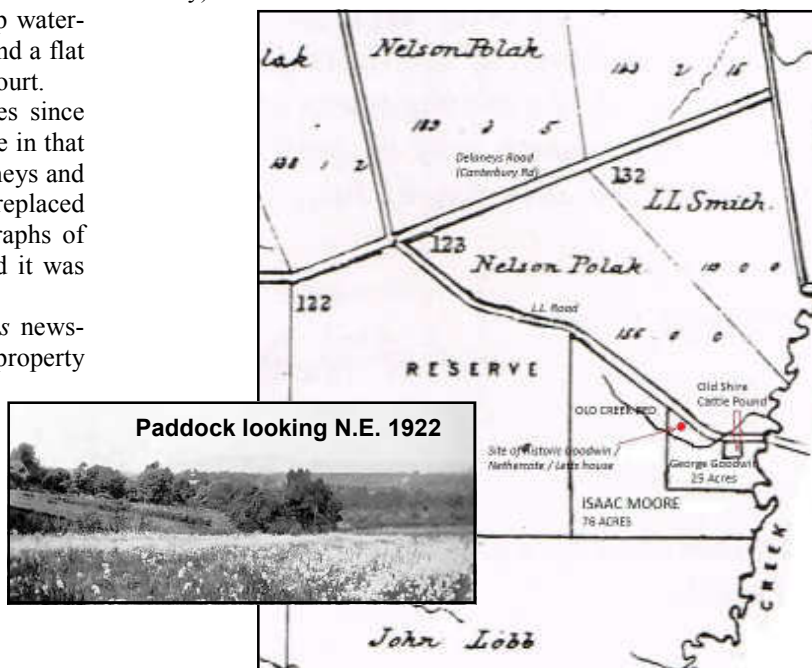
In my historical crusade to obtain more information on Vermont, I met Gwen Romanis (nee Nethercote) and Viv Nethercote, whose family had lived in the house when it was known as Weston Favell.

The Nethercote family – Arthur Herbert (Bert), Emily Irene (nee Peck) and their children George,

Gwen, John and Viv – moved to the Vermont property of then 13 acres in August 1920. They came to Vermont in the hope that the higher altitude and pure air might be a cure for Emily and Bert, who both had tuberculosis. Emily's sister, Gwen Peck, gave up her work as a nurse to help bring up the family.

Viv Nethercote (1917–2012), the youngest of the family, grew up at Weston Favell, which was named after the birthplace in Northamptonshire of Bert's father. Viv told me on many occasions that the house was built in 1883 or earlier, as evidenced by the fact that his family had discovered papers of the *Argus* dating back to this date. The paper was used as roof insulation with either sawdust or seaweed. Viv slept on the verandah with blinds sheltering from the wind (see the 1927 photograph of the house).

The Nethercote family transformed the property from a flower farm into a type of poultry farm. As the children grew older George Nethercote (the oldest sibling) lived in a house behind it; he eventually married Joyce Leslie (daughter of the vicar of St. Luke's Vermont). They had three children: Dick, Alison and Ian (a former member of the Whitehorse Historical Society).



Below: Nunawading Shire Rate Entry 1876 for George A. Goodwin





Tennis at Weston Favell, 1926

When I met Gwen Nethercote (1911–1998) during the 1980s we talked about old Vermont and she produced an old album that had photographs of her childhood at Weston Favell on Boronia Road. At the time I did recall seeing a photograph of the old house; the question was whether these photographs still existed. With the recent discovery that they had been kept carefully within the extended Nethercote family, the answer is yes. Gwen loved her life in Vermont and the outdoor living that Weston Favell presented, which included riding with her lovely horse named Lady.

Looking at land titles, rate books, postmaster directories and land surveys helps to identify the owners prior to the Nethercotes. The Plumridge family owned the land from 1888 until 1920, and during that period the original 25 acres were subdivided into a-12 and 13-acre allotment. Ernest Alfred Plumridge (1862–1947) was a florist and nurseryman; hence the abundance of floral and other plant life on the property.

But how do we account for the lady who once visited Gerald Letts and told him that she was born there? Well, this lady happens to be Emma Lottie Goodwin (b.1881). She was one of 12 children born to George Augustus Goodwin and Annie (nee Edwards). At least two of the children were born in Vermont. George A. Goodwin was more noted for his involvement with the 'Model Township of Blackburn' whilst living in Blackburn from 1884. The proof, therefore, is astounding as to the current house having been built prior to 1883.

Sunday Afternoon Trip

Mrs. Letts, of "Weston Favell", Boronia Road, Vermont, is throwing open her camellia gardens to visitors and serving Devonshire tea next Sunday (23rd) in aid of Red Cross funds.

Mrs. Letts' camellia gardens are famous and are at their best just now. She is anxious that as many visitors who are motoring on Sunday will visit them.

Admission is by a silver coin and Devonshire Tea (2/-) will be served from 2.30 p.m.

after a three-year period of occupancy that included proof of living on the property, installing fencing and other property improvements. Hence the Nunawading Shire Rate Books of 1876 show 'House and Land', the house probably having been



1927

built the previous year. Part of the land acquisition included the old shire cattle pound, formerly used for stray cattle. It was located close to

the old Dandenong Creek pastoral runs.

The Goodwins ran cattle in both Vermont and Blackburn, and George was known to be a good judge of quality animals, having some of the best in the district. He knew all about the land acts period, and had produced *The Land Selector's Guide* from his Melbourne Real Estate offices back in 1873. His primary interest in earlier days was to help the common farmer obtain land more easily, and he had dealings in assisting Isaac Moore (neighbour) and David Boyle prior to acquiring his own piece of Vermont land.

What an interesting history, then, we have for the house and property of Weston Favell!



1983

References:

Nethercote Gwen Mary *Weston Favell Vermont Album 1917-1943*

Nethercote, Joan. December 2000, ND2723 *Vermont and Us*

Shambook, Tim 2010 *This Is Vermont, The Green Hill Where I Live*

Trove, National Library Australia <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Turner, Patricia E. 1993, *And Time Remembered Is Grief Forgotten: The Story of the Goodwins of Blackburn and Toongabbie*

WHS Committee Contacts

President:

Peter Simmenauer
9877 0141

Vice- President:

Vicki Jones-Evans
9873 3383

Secretary:

Rachael Cottle

Treasurer:

Bob Gardiner

Local History Room: (03) 9873 4946

Newsletter Team:

Chris Gray
Bettina Stevenson
Wendy Standfield
Valda Arrowsmith OAM
Vicki Jones-Evans
Peter Simmenauer

WHS website:

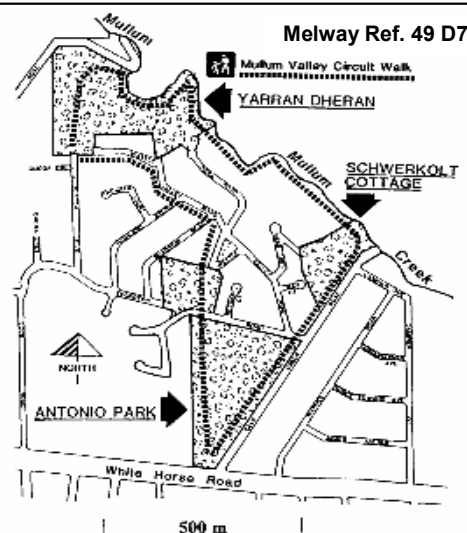
www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/
facebook.com/whitehorsehistory

Email:

whitehorsehistory@hotmail.com

Postal Address:

P.O. Box 272
MITCHAM VIC 3132



Copy deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 13 November 2013



The Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Society is to foster historical interest and knowledge.

To collect, document, research, preserve and exhibit items that show how people have lived and worked in the development of the Whitehorse area from human settlement to the present day.

POD

**Place of Deposit
Accredited by the
PRO Victoria**

CITY OF



*The Whitehorse
Historical Society, Inc.
acknowledges the
support of the
City of Whitehorse.*



REMEMBER

**Whitehorse Historical Society
Local History Collection & Place of Deposit
Open 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Wednesdays.
Visitors welcome.**

Ring 9873 4946 for an appointment at other times.

**Box Hill Cemetery Records & Nunawading
Gazette for 1964-1974
available on microfiche for research.**

Sender: *Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. & Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex
Deep Creek Road, Mitcham, VIC 3132
If undeliverable, please return to P.O. Box 272 Mitcham, VIC 3132*

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

